

# News Release

## *Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge*

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For Immediate Release

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### **Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan Proposed for Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge**

#### **Public Comments Invited, Public Meeting Scheduled**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has completed the draft comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and final environmental assessment (EA) for managing wildlife, habitat, and public use at Nantucket National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Nantucket, Massachusetts. A CCP is a 15-year strategic plan that guides management for all refuge programs. The Service has proposed three alternative approaches for managing the refuge in its draft CCP, including the agency's preferred alternative focusing on enhanced wildlife management and visitor services.

The Service invites public comment and input on the proposed plan either in writing, email, or in person through October 1, 2011. Two public open house meetings have been scheduled for September 15, 2011. An afternoon session will be held from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. and an evening session from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Each session will include a short presentation on the draft plan. Service staff will solicit any comments or concerns during the meetings. The venue for both public meetings is fully accessible and is as follows:

Thursday, September 15, 2011  
Open House Public Meetings  
1-3 pm and 6-8 pm

Nantucket Inn  
1 Miller's Lane,  
Nantucket, MA 02554

Copies of the draft CCP/EA can be downloaded from the Service's Northeast region website at, <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/nantucket/ccphome.html>.

To submit written comments, obtain additional information, or to request the plan in hard copy or CD-Rom, please contact Carl Melberg, Refuge Planner, at Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex, 73 Weir Hill Road, Sudbury, MA 01766 or by email at [northeastplanning@fws.gov](mailto:northeastplanning@fws.gov) (Please put "Nantucket NWR" in the subject line).

The three management alternatives proposed in the draft CCP/EA are:

1. Alternative A, Current Management.
2. Alternative B, Enhanced Wildlife and Visitor Services
3. Alternative C, Wildlife Diversity and Natural Process Emphasis.

Alternative B is the Service's Preferred Alternative. It combines the actions we believe would most effectively achieve refuge purposes, vision, and goals, and would make an important contribution to conserving Federal trust resources of concern. This alternative strives to provide a balance between visitor services and recreational

opportunities with increased habitat protection for species of concern on the refuge and throughout Nantucket Island.

- ***Wildlife and habitat management.*** Under this alternative, the Service would continue to collaborate with partners to meet federal and state management guidelines for plovers and terns on the refuge, create a system of zones on the refuge that protect habitat for seals and nesting and staging birds, and allow access to various portions of the refuge year-round. The Service would increase habitat protection and species monitoring capacity by providing on-site seasonal staff, collaborate with partners to initiate research to fill knowledge gaps, implement predator control as necessary, treat invasive species, and protect and restore the dune habitat.
- ***Visitor services.*** Our Visitor Services program would be enhanced to provide more opportunities for wildlife observation and photography, fishing, environmental education, and interpretation which would be provided by working with our partners.
- ***Refuge administration.*** Alternative B would propose a level of staffing that meets the minimum requirements for a refuge of this complexity by adding a part-time, year-round visitor services specialist and a full-time biologist stationed on Nantucket Island, and a new law enforcement officer stationed at Monomoy NWR in Chatham, Massachusetts.

When submitting comments, the Service requests the following:

- State your concern. Concerns can be based on an action the Service is allowing, not allowing, or did not address.
- Suggest another solution: please be as specific as possible.
- Focus on specific actions, not on the alternatives as a whole. Final plans often draw from more than one alternative, based on comments received.

The current 21-acre Nantucket NWR was established in 1973 to protect and enhance migratory bird resources and to protect other natural resources and endangered species. The refuge lies at the northern tip of a narrow peninsula that forms the northernmost point of Nantucket Island.

Although conserving wildlife and habitat is the refuge's first priority, the public can observe and photograph wildlife, fish, or participate in environmental education and interpretation programs.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).